THE DICKENSIAN

A Magazine for Dickens Lovers
and Monthly Record of the Dickens Fellowship

VOL. II. MAY, 1906. No. 5.

WHEN FOUND—

THE April magazines contained three interesting and important articles on Dickens. "Dickens in Switzerland," by Deshler Welch, in *Harper's*, deals with Dickens's sojourns in that country and his friendship with the Hon. Richard and Mrs. Watson, of Rockingham Castle, about whom some very interesting facts are given, with copious extracts from his letters to them. As is well known, Rockingham Castle is "Chesney Wold" of *Bleak House*, and the Hon. Mrs. Watson was to a great extent the original of Lady Dedlock. Dickens's correspondence with the Watsons extended over twenty years, and there are some characteristic and delightful excerpts given from those letters throughout the article. It was to the Watsons he dedicated *David Copperfield*, and in sending the final proofs for them to read, he referred to the volume as "your book." There are pictures and portraits to add to its interest.

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In the *Century Magazine* appears an article, "A Week at Waterloo," written by Lady de Lancey, whose husband was on Wellington's staff. Lady de Lancey's manuscript was read by Scott and Dickens, and the article, now first published, is prefaced by the letters which the two writers sent the authoress after having read the manuscript. Dickens was considerably moved by it, and his letter is altogether charming and full of praise. "If I live for fifty years," he said, "I shall dream of it every now and then from this hour to the day of my death, with the most frightful reality." A reproduction of Maclise's portrait of Dickens accompanies the article.

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The third article is Mr. Harry Furniss's "A Shakespeare Birthday: a Reminiscence of Charles Dickens," in the *Pall Mall Magazine*. It is a transcription of a notable speech delivered by Dickens at the Shakespeare birthday celebration at the Garrick Club in 1854. Mr. Furniss got his facts from Sir James O'Dowd, who was present, and has filled in his canvas with interesting details. It certainly was a striking speech, but we think that Mr. Furniss has got a little wrong in a couple of instances. In the first place he is wrong in his dates. The dinner was held in April, 1854, and Dickens was the chairman. "This was an event of unusual interest, for, as you know, Dickens had had a quarrel, in fact two quarrels, with the Club—the Thackeray affair, and all that, is old history—and had been elected a member again." The Thackeray affair certainly is old history now, but it was future history (if we may be forgiven a seeming paradox) in 1854, for the article in *Town Talk* which caused the quarrel with Thackeray and Dickens's withdrawal from the Garrick Club did not take place until

the summer or early autumn of 1858. There may have been another quarrel with the Club prior to 1854, but if so we confess that we have no knowledge of it.

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But there is an even more curious point in the speech. Mr. Furniss quotes the greater part of the speech in the third person past tense as related to him by Sir James O'Dowd, but at the end we are given a paragraph in the first person. "Dickens went on to say that this was also the birthday of the English novel. 'Every writer of fiction, although he may not adopt the dramatic form, writes, in effect, for the stage. He may never write plays, but the truth and passion which are in him must be more or less reflected in the great mirror which he holds up to Nature.'" Note that these words are quoted as part of a speech delivered by Dickens in April, 1854. But on 29 March, 1858—exactly four years later—he attended the thirteenth anniversary of the General Theatrical Fund at the Freemasons' Tavern. Thackeray was in the chair, and Dickens concluded his speech with a generous eulogy of his fellow-artist—the quarrel had not occurred yet—and in the course of that eulogy he used the very words quoted above as having been spoken in 1854 in reference to Shakespeare. It is a very curious point, and we cannot help thinking that "some one has blundered."

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Another Dickens "discovery" was made last month in the shape of the well-known letter which Dickens wrote to John M. Makeham on the day before he died. The letter is familiar to most Dickensians from the fact that it was one of the last two written by Dickens. The other was to Charles Kent, which is now in the British Museum. Forster refers to both of them, and gives much of the text of the former. A quotation from it also appeared in last month's *Dickensian*. Of course there was no "discovery" about the matter at all, beyond that the owner of the "find" had only a clever facsimile, many of which are in existence. The original is, we are assured, still in the possession of the family of John M. Makeham.

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The next performance of the Dickens Fellowship Dramatic Club will take place at the Cripplegate Institute, Golden Lane, E.C., on Saturday, 12 May, at 8 p.m. The play chosen for representation is *The Old Curiosity Shop* in four acts, and among those who will take parts are Mrs. J. T. Grein, Miss H. Pearl Humphry, Miss Kathleen Marriott, Mrs. W. Teignmouth Shore, Messrs. A. E. Brookes-Cross, Percy Merriman, W. Teignmouth Shore, and Frank Staff. The prices of the tickets are: reserved, 5s. and 2s. 6d.; unreserved, 1s.; family tickets for not less than four 2s. 6d. seats at 2s. each; to be had of the Hon. Secretary, Mr. Walter Dexter, 40 Ommaney Road, New Cross, S.E., or at Head-quarters. Mr. W. Teignmouth Shore deals with the play on another page of this issue.

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Arrangements are now being made for the Fellowship's visit to Bath referred to in our last issue. The date will probably be the 9th June, and applications should be made at once for tickets to the Hon. Secretary.

THE EDITOR.

THE ILLUSTRATORS OF DICKENS

By W. A. FRASER

I

GEORGE CRUIKSHANK

THE subject of Dickens and his illustrators has been often dealt with from bibliographical and other points of view, with the artistic merit of the drawings taken more or less on trust. It is a commonly expressed opinion nowadays that the works of Dickens have never been adequately and suitably illustrated, that most of the artists employed originally caricatured rather than portrayed the chief personages in the books. In this series of articles it is proposed to deal with the work of Dickens's illustrators from a critical point of view as they appear in the light of modern taste. Whether Cruikshank and Phiz were the ideal artists to pictorially treat the novels of Dickens is perhaps a question which the lay mind does not trouble about. There the pictures are, and as they have been inseparably connected with the books so long, no one seems to question the merit of them or their right to be there. But the more critical have other views.

The ideal artist for *Pickwick*, and all the earlier works of Dickens, would have been R. C. Caldecott. What a dream of beauty and of humour, of grace and charm, he would have made of *Pickwick*, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, and *Barnaby Rudge*! His splendid talents would have had full scope. Author and artist would have been well matched, and every drawing would enchant us, if possible, more than the preceding one. The Christmas numbers of *The Graphic* contained many exquisite examples of his skill. Charming girls, portly old boys, handsome young men, old family servants, butlers, coachmen, and their like drawn to the very life, and framed in delightful country scenes or in beautiful old-fashioned rooms. Not a trace of coarse caricature or wild exaggeration in these perfect drawings, and yet the whole design is full of mirth. How Dickens would have appreciated Caldecott's brilliant sketches! In Cruikshank's delineation of everyday life sheer ugliness reached a limit not easily surpassed.

No living artist has done more exquisite work in book illustrations than Hugh Thomson. What a joy for ever would a *Pickwick* or a *David Copperfield* be to all true lovers of art illustrated by him! *The Vicar of Wakefield*, to mention only one of the many works of fiction enriched by this delightful artist's pencil, shows how charmingly he can carry out the ideas of the author. We ought to have a complete set of Dickens's works illustrated by Hugh Thomson. That his designs would be the very personification of grace and beauty is certain.

Not even the most indulgent critic can seriously assert that Dickens ever received really adequate artistic assistance in any of his novels, with the exceptions of *Our Mutual Friend* and *Edwin Drood*. Hablot Browne was not a genius or even a great artist, and George Cruikshank was a mere caricaturist of the bad old school of Gilray and Rowlandson. John Leech and Doyle contributed to the Christmas Books only. It seems probable that with John Leech as an illustrator Dickens would have fared better than with Phiz. Assuredly Leech was the greater of

the two. He has left behind him much finer work in the pages of *Punch* than anything Hablot Browne ever accomplished. John Leech could draw pretty and graceful girls, and his horses and dogs are quite brilliant. Phiz makes but a poor show with animals. The horses sketched by him in *Dombey and Son* are very wooden, with the exception of the picture entitled "On the Dark Road." In this design four horses are shown, harnessed to an open carriage, and driven at great speed by one postilion only seated upon one of the wheelers. The horses are admirably drawn, but the whole composition is spoilt by the postilion, who is far too large for the horses, and the carriage—out of proportion altogether!

In Forster's *Life of Charles Dickens* George Cruikshank is referred to by the author as an "original genius," a "distinguished artist," and a "great caricaturist"! Cruikshank was not a genius, he was not a distinguished artist, and he was not even a great caricaturist. After carefully examining some hundreds of his drawings, the only possible conclusion is that a large proportion of his work is astonishingly bad, and reveals a perfectly astounding lack of technical skill in a professional artist.

In the first place, George Cruikshank was absolutely incapable of drawing a pretty girl or a handsome woman. He simply did not possess the requisite ability; and also he appears to have had no eye whatever for beauty in the female form. The last illustration in *Oliver Twist*, "Rose Maylie and Oliver," affords a striking proof of this strange inability. It is perfectly evident that Cruikshank bestowed great pains upon this design. It is drawn with most unusual care; the interior of the church and the figure of Oliver are eminently satisfactory, but Rose Maylie is a failure absolute and complete. The figure is that of an elderly lady, and the face and attitude confirm this impression. If the illustration had been intended to represent "Mrs. Maylie and Oliver," no fault could have been found with the design—on the contrary, it would have been deserving of high praise; but Rose Maylie was a young girl under twenty, and Cruikshank has drawn the face and figure of an elderly lady of any age between fifty and sixty! This was his second attempt at depicting this incident at the end of the story. The first did not satisfy Dickens, and he wrote to the artist begging him to cancel the plate and design another in its place. There is no doubt that in some respects the second design is superior to the first, but the former is by no means unpleasing. The figures (Rose Maylie, Harry Maylie, Oliver, and Mrs. Maylie) are not caricatures, and the interior of the room is carefully drawn. We fail to discover any signs of excessive haste or carelessness in this drawing. Rose Maylie is not graceful or pretty, but she is as nearly so as any young lady could be in the hands of Cruikshank. The ending of the story of *Oliver Twist*, however, was in a subdued and even solemn key, and the design at first produced by Cruikshank is scarcely appropriate. The second drawing, so absolutely different, is exactly in harmony with the beautiful but very serious words with which Dickens closes the book.

"Mrs. Corney and Mr. Bumble taking tea" is one of the best pictures Cruikshank ever designed. The figures are not caricatures, Mrs. Corney being the typical workhouse matron, and Mr. Bumble is

not greatly exaggerated, while the room in which they are seated is photographic in its accuracy. Every detail has been most carefully studied and thought out. The small round table, the carpet on the floor, the ornaments on the mantelpiece, the quaint looking-glass, the very hearthrug on which the cat and kittens disport themselves, all are perfect. It is the matron's room drawn to the very life, and shows

THE CANCELLED PLATE OF "OLIVER TWIST"

wonderful power of observation as well as astonishing skill in execution. It makes our regret all the greater that, as a rule, Cruikshank contented himself with drawing rough, coarse, careless caricatures devoid of grace or real humour.

Another illustration to *Oliver Twist* deserves some attention. Oliver, stung by Noah Claypole's cowardly insult to the memory of his dead

mother, fells the hulking charity-boy to the ground. Cruikshank never made a better drawing of Oliver Twist than this. He is a splendid little fellow, and a striking contrast to the other actors in the scene. Charlotte may pass, but Mrs. Sowerberry is a gross caricature. The squalid, sordid, mean, miserable kitchen is admirably depicted, and drawn with the greatest care and precision.

The meeting below the stairs of London Bridge between Rose Maylie, Mr. Brownlow, and Nancy is yet another well-executed design. Rose Maylie is almost pretty, and the two other figures are better drawn and with less exaggeration than usual. The background of stone walls and steps is gloomy and exceedingly impressive. The whole design is in harmony with the author's intention.

None of the earlier drawings in the book is equal to these three, and the frontispiece is very weak and bad. "Mr. Bumble and Mrs. Corney taking tea" would be far better, and as a coloured plate simply delightful.

The famous design of "Fagin in the Condemned Cell" has been somewhat overrated. It is impressive, certainly, and would be much more so if the artist had exercised some self-restraint and had not allowed himself to exaggerate the Jew's features to such an extent. This is a blot on an otherwise fine picture.

Sketches by Boz was illustrated by Cruikshank, by no means successfully, although it contains one most excellent drawing and two or three which are fairly good. In the picture entitled "Early Coaches" Boz himself is shown to us in the guise of a traveller, with his purse in his hand, about to book his seat. Again, in "Public Dinners," there is an admirable portrait of Dickens as he appeared at that happy, youthful time. The children are badly drawn, but the stewards, with their white wands, are not caricatures, with the exception of the two last figures in the little procession. The artist himself, and Mr. Chapman and Mr. Hall, of the famous firm of that name, are also represented in this interesting plate. Boz appears yet a third time in the drawing "A Pickpocket in Custody." The young man in the background, his head and shoulders just visible above the heads of the crowd of street boys, is undoubtedly intended for Dickens, although it is not an altogether successful likeness. The title-page is exceedingly well drawn, and is a really charming picture. With these exceptions, however, the illustrations contained in this volume are feeble and disappointing to the last degree. When the majority of the figures are not outrageous caricatures of humanity they are weak, crude, and often out of drawing. In many instances the background is well and skilfully executed, and the rooms with their William IV furniture and decorations are decidedly interesting. When the background is a landscape or a street the artist is much less happy, the drawing being often stiff, hard, and conventional. Much of the work that Cruikshank is responsible for would not be tolerated in the book illustrations of the present day. Many of his designs, both in *Oliver Twist* and *Sketches by Boz*, are dismal and depressing failures. They irritate the reader by their inadequate and incongruous presence in the books of a man of real genius. Those which we can contemplate with satisfaction are very few, and they are almost lost among a crowd of most inferior designs.

The two volumes by Dickens illustrated by Cruikshank would undoubtedly gain in value by the exclusion of a large number of his designs. Men are judged by the company they keep, and books are often condemned as caricatures because of their illustrations. Out of the thirty-eight illustrations drawn by Cruikshank to illustrate *Sketches by Boz*, only half a dozen are in any sense worthy of the book. These are "The Election for Beadle," "The Parish Engine," "Public Dinners," "A Pickpocket in Custody," "Mr. Minns and his Cousin,"

THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE

Illustrating *The Lamplighter's Story*. The last drawing done by Cruikshank for Dickens's writings

and "The Winglebury Duel." In *Oliver Twist* there are twenty-three designs from Cruikshank's pencil, of which the only really meritorious drawings are "Oliver recovering from the fever," "Mr. Bumble and Mrs. Corney taking tea," "Fagin in the Condemned Cell," "Rose Maylie and Oliver," and "The Meeting."

George Cruikshank could no more draw a horse or a dog than he could a pretty girl. Bill Sikes's bulldog in *Oliver Twist* will be remembered. A more abject failure it would be difficult to discover in any drawing by a professional artist. It is lamentable that the perfect pages

of Charles Dickens should have been defaced by the coarse and vulgar sketches of George Cruikshank. Except in one instance, "Fagin in the Condemned Cell," their coarseness is not even redeemed by powerful and impressive drawing.

In *Oliver Twist* there are many splendid opportunities for the artist. Imagine the story illustrated by Doré! What magnificent, grim, and terrible designs would not the great French master have created out of the many lurid suggestions in which *Oliver Twist* abounds!

Cruikshank also illustrated some minor works of Dickens. To *The Mudfog Papers* he contributed three drawings. "Ned Twigger in the Kitchen at Mudfog Hall" is a vigorous, comic sketch, and far superior to the other two. "The Tyrant Sowster" is both crude and feeble, and "The Automatic Police Officer and Real Offenders" is, if possible, a worse drawing. To *The Lamplighter's Story*, which was Dickens's sole contribution to "Pic-Nic Papers," Cruikshank provided an etching entitled "The Philosopher's Stone," and this was the last drawing contributed by the artist to illustrate any story by Charles Dickens. It only requires a single glance at the vast majority of Cruikshank's designs to cause us to feel sincere and fervent gratitude for the immense advance in the art of book illustration since the bad old times, nearly seventy years ago, when any drawing signed by Cruikshank, however atrocious, was considered good enough to illustrate the writings of the greatest master of humour and of pathos England has ever produced.

Our fathers and grandfathers admired Cruikshank, and were amused by his caricatures. We of the twentieth century are not so easily entertained, and we compare him, greatly to his disadvantage, with Phil May, Tom Browne, Will Owen, and Dudley Hardy, to say nothing of Gordon Browne, Linley Sambourne, and Bernard Partridge. The late Phil May more nearly resembled Cruikshank in his style of drawing than any of our modern artists, but his sketches are true to life, not intentional exaggerations. We see the men, women, and children he drew every day in the slums of our great cities; but Cruikshank's grotesques we do *not* see, fortunately for us!

Cruikshank, in his monumental fatuity, claimed to have originated *Oliver Twist*, an exceedingly popular novel—far more so than the *Sketches by Boz*, otherwise this "distinguished artist" would indubit ably have inspired this book also! We admire his modesty and mode ration, likewise his self-denial in keeping silence on this important point during the lifetime of his generous friend Charles Dickens! Most certainly George Cruikshank *was* an "original genius" in his views concerning mine and thine!

The art of Dickens enriched the human race with inestimable gifts of joy and kindness. Cruikshank did not possess an "art," but he had the knack of drawing caricatures which were exactly suited to the taste of an age vastly coarser, rougher, and more vulgar than our own.

In looking at the men and women drawn by Cruikshank we are reminded of the theatrical figures sold to children for toy theatres. Cruikshank's, however, are more grotesque. It cannot be denied that he achieved fame, of a certain kind, to a greater degree than Phiz, who would, in all probability, have been quite forgotten by this time were it not for his long association with the masterpieces of Dickens.

THE GOVERNMENT EDUCATION BILL

DICKENS'S VIEWS ON SOME OF ITS POINTS

By J. W. T. LEY

IN writing on this subject in *The Dickensian* it may be as well to state at the beginning that we have not the remotest intention of entering into or giving expression to our own views on the unhappy controversies which have been aroused to full activity once more by the Government Education Bill, introduced into the House of Commons by Mr. Birrell. In these controversies this magazine can have no part, but it seems to us that it is well within our scope to note what were Dickens's own views on the main points raised by the Bill. To deal with his views on Education generally would require more space than we have at our disposal, but for the omission no apologies are needed. We are concerned here only with Dickens's opinions on certain points raised by the Government Bill, and Education is not one of those points; indeed, at present the interests of the child seem to be a secondary consideration altogether, and inevitably must remain so until the various Christian denominations can meet upon one common ground of Christian tolerance. How much toleration Dickens would have felt for the present state of things there can be no need to inquire. A fairly extensive knowledge of his writings leaves us little room to doubt that he would have endorsed with all his heart the remarks with which Mr. Birrell introduced his speech: "For forty long years have we dwelt in the wilderness of strife, contention, and mutual suspicion, and during that period we have at all events become only too well acquainted with the one aspect of the Education question, which bears the ill-omened name of the religious difficulty. It is not the most important aspect, but unhappily it is the one which attracts the most notice. I should indeed be a happy man if I could believe that this crowded House had met to discuss this afternoon before an eager and interested country some of the more important aspects of the question. I know full well what you are come here expecting to see—a reed shaken by the wind, withering and trembling in the icy and unfeeling blasts of sectarian differences, which more than anything else nip the buds of piety and reverence and create throughout the whole land a spirit of self-satisfied materialism."

With these sectarian differences we know that Dickens never had the least sympathy, and when we read to-day of these unseemly squabbles a remark of his contained in a letter to M. de Cerjat is involuntarily brought to mind: "The Church that is to have its part in the coming time must be a more Christian one, with less arbitrary pretensions, and a stronger hold upon the mantle of our Saviour, as He walked and talked upon this earth."

That Dickens believed in free and liberal education is shown, not only by the general tone of his books, but by many definite remarks in his letters and speeches. To Charles Knight, for instance, he wrote: "If I can be of the feeblest use in advancing a project so intimately connected with an end on which my heart is set—the liberal education of the people—I shall be sincerely glad." Often in his public speeches

he spoke to the same effect. At Leeds in 1847 he spoke of the power of ignorance and the power of knowledge, and added: "I never heard but one tangible position taken against educational establishments for the people, and that was, that in this or that instance, or in these or those instances, education for the people has failed. And I have never traced even this to its source, but I have found that the term education, so employed, meant anything but education—implied the mere imperfect application of old, ignorant, preposterous spelling-book lessons to the meanest purposes—as if you should teach a child that there is no higher end in electricity, for example, than expressly to strike a mutton-pie out of the hand of a greedy boy, and on which it is as unreasonable to found an objection to education in a comprehensive sense as it would be to object altogether to the combing of youthful hair, because in a certain charity school they had the practice of combing it into the pupil's eyes."

Again at Liverpool in 1844, he said: "If you happily have been well taught yourself . . . so much the more should you make one in sympathy with those who are below you. . . . Differences of wealth, of rank, of intellect we know there must be, and we respect them; but we would give to all the means of taking out one patent of nobility, and we define it in the words of a great living poet . . .

> 'Howe'er it be, it seems to me
> 'Tis only noble to be good:
> Kind hearts are more than coronets,
> And simple faith than Norman blood.'"

At Birmingham in the same year, also: "But surely if, as it is stated, the people are ill-disposed and mischievous, that is the best reason that can be offered for teaching them better; and if they are not, surely that is a reason for giving them every opportunity of vindicating their injured reputation. . . . In any case—nay, in every case—if we would reward honesty, if we would hold out encouragement to good, if we would eradicate that which is evil, or correct that which is bad, education—comprehensive liberal education—is the one thing needful and the only effective end."

With the two main points of Mr. Birrell's Bill Dickens would have been in the fullest sympathy. The principle of popular control was one in which he believed with his whole heart. Of course, such an institution as national free education was scarcely thought of in his time, but the very corner-stone of his whole political creed was education as a preparation for Government of the People for the People by the People. Space is too limited to enable us to quote in support of this assertion, but passage after passage from his books, letters, and speeches might be quoted. In favour of unsectarian teaching he spoke emphatically many times. In 1843 he was anxious to write an article for the *Edinburgh Review* on this very subject, and in making the proposal to Mr. Macvey Napier he wrote: "Would it meet the purposes of the *Review* to come out strongly against any system of education based exclusively on the principles of the Established Church? If it would, I should like to show why such a thing as the Church Catechism is wholly inapplicable to the state of ignorance that now prevails; and why no system but one, so general in great religious principles as

to include all creeds, can meet the wants and understandings, of the dangerous classes of society. This is the only broad ground I could hold, consistently with what I feel and think on such a subject. . . . I could show these people in a state so miserable and so neglected, that their very nature rebels against the simplest religion, and that to convey to them the faintest outlines of any system of distinction between right and wrong is in itself a giant's task, before which mysteries and quibbles for forms *must* give way."

In the speech at Birmingham, from which we have already quoted, he spoke to the same effect: "I have another peculiar ground of satisfaction in connexion with the object of this assembly, and it is that the resolutions about to be proposed do not contain in themselves anything of a sectarian or class nature, that they do not confine themselves to any one single institution, but assert the great and omnipotent principles of comprehensive education everywhere and under every circumstance. I beg to say that I concur, heart and hand, in those principles, and will do all in my power for their advancement; for I hold, in accordance with the imperfect knowledge which I possess, that it is impossible for any fabric of society to go on day after day, and year after year, from father to son, and from grandfather to grandson, punishing men for not engaging in the pursuit of virtue and for the practice of crime, without showing them what virtue is, and where it best can be found—in justice, religion, and truth."

We set out with the promise that we would not express our own views on the various differences which are now agitating the country, and that promise we have endeavoured conscientiously to fulfil. We have felt perfectly justified, however, in pointing out how much Dickens would have been in sympathy with the two great principles of Mr. Birrell's Bill—popular control and unsectarian religious instruction, for we hold that it is well within the scope of a magazine bearing the name of our most popular novelist to inquire from time to time what were his views on the various social questions which are ever prominent, and which seem sometimes as far from settlement as they were when he began his crusade in the cause of the people. That he was in advance of his time in many respects is obvious. Free, liberal, and comprehensive education he agitated for in 1844; it was not till 1870, the year of his death, that this idea began to be realized. And there is another respect in which he might be regarded as a prophet, unwittingly and certainly without any desire, yet a prophet nevertheless. In 1839 Mr. Squeers propounded his theory of education:—

"'Now then, where's the first boy?'

'Please, sir, he's cleaning the back parlour window,' said the temporary head of the philosophic class.

'So he is, to be sure,' rejoined Squeers. 'We go upon the practical mode of teaching, Nickleby, the regular education system. C-l-e-a-n, clean, verb active, to make bright, to scour. W-i-n, win, d-e-r, der, winder, a casement. When the boy knows this out of his book, he goes and does it.'"

This was written in a spirit of the sharpest satire, but it is remarkable how nearly it illustrates the most approved modern systems of practical education.

"THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP" ON THE STAGE

By W. TEIGNMOUTH SHORE,
HON. STAGE MANAGER OF THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP DRAMATIC CLUB

APROPOS the forthcoming production by the Dickens Fellowship Dramatic Club of a stage version of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, it may not be untimely to put forward some notes about the difficulties which present themselves to the stage-manager and the actors.

"Why act Dickens at all?" say some folk. "Why not?" is the obvious but not conclusive answer. In the first place, Dickens himself in his readings, which were so much more than mere readings, showed that a great deal was to be gained by a dramatic rendering of his creations; in the second, the acting of his characters does much to rebut the oft-made accusation that Dickens was a caricaturist, that his pathos was not true and deep, and, chiefest, it helps to destroy the harmful impression made upon the public mind by the first illustrators of his works, who reduced his living beings to dead grotesques. Clothed and in their right minds, Dickens's characters are vivid and real, and carefully managed and carefully acted versions of any of his novels cannot but help those who witness them to come to closer grips and to a clearer sympathy with and understanding of his creations. We shall endeavour, in our production of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, to show the Grandfather and Little Nell, Sampson Brass and his lovely sister, Dick Swiveller and The Marchioness, and other famous persons, as they lived, moved, and had their being in the mind of Charles Dickens. Not to his illustrators have we gone for inspiration, but to his own pages, in which he fully details and describes the outward as well as the inward characteristics of his "children." We are not so foolish as to hope that our renderings will even approach perfection, but we are striving earnestly after accuracy and suggestiveness.

There are many difficulties that present themselves. Every one who has read the story has formed some idea of each character, and our single conceptions cannot satisfy all. Then, again, the many different illustrators have formed "public opinion," and for the first few minutes some of our representations may seem incorrect or even entirely wrong; but we hope they will prove worth considering, and we can quote chapter and verse for what we have done. Of course, in every case the idiosyncracies of the actors must be allowed for, but we trust that in essentials and in most details we shall prove at least, as I have said, suggestive and accurate.

It is intensely enjoyable to "study" Dickens "parts"; to endeavour to get right inside the characters, to think with their minds, to see with their eyes, speak with their voices, and to thrill with their emotions. No easy task, but one of absorbing delight.

The matter of costume does not present so much difficulty as that of scenery, for here again we come in contact with preconceived ideas and the illustrations. Here again we shall strive to avoid inaccuracy and to be suggestive. The Old Curiosity Shop itself will not be piled high with the lumber of such places, but we shall endeavour to "suggest" the atmosphere of gloom and depression which beset the home of Little Nell. The drowning of Quilp is, of course, an impossibility on the

stage; here we have been compelled to depart from the letter, but not, we hope, from the spirit of the novel.

It would be possible to fill many pages of *The Dickensian* with a discussion of what we have had to do and of the way in which we have endeavoured to surmount our difficulties. The above brief notes will indicate what these difficulties are, and will show, I hope, that, whatever will be our shortcomings, we have attacked our task in a spirit of earnest and sincere reverence for one of the most delightful works of the master to whose fame it is our delight to do such honour as lies in our power.

THE TOMPION CLOCK

By PERCY FITZGERALD, M.A., F.S.A.

WHEN Boz introduces us in *Pickwick Papers* to the Pump Room, in his truly rollicking Bath Scenes, after making that touching appeal for the poor's Free Hospital, he suddenly calls attention to a clock that was there, and states that it was "*a Tompion clock.*" This particularity is a part of Boz's art. What other novelist has told us the room number chalked on the boots at an inn—or even give us the name of the blacking that was used on the boots? Had it been Dent or Benson or Leroy—but *Tompion!* This maker had a reputation with the scientific men, but the general reader knew nothing of him. Yet at this moment any well-informed person who meets the name, at once thinks of Pickwick and the Pump Room. It is recurred to again and again in newspapers and guide-books; and only a few days ago, in a notice on some horological work, Tompion is praised for his inventions, but it is added, "he is more familiar from the mention of his name in *Pickwick.*" Exactly so. Every true Pickwickian thinks with fondness and curiosity of this "harmless, necessary, and I will add comforting article of furniture." Under this curious spell, when on a first enchanting visit to Bath—I know not how many years back—I made straight for the Pump Room and the *Tompion clock.* I gazed at it with almost reverence. It seemed to me to embody the whole spirit of the place, and to be likely to take living shape presently, like Tom Smart's old chair. It has indeed claims of its own, for it has been there in the stately city for nigh two hundred years. It is a very imposing structure, solid, impressive, nine feet high—a fine long-cased clock, with this inscription: "The watch and sundial was given by Mr. Thomas Tompion, of London, clockmaker." It is wound only once a month.

Boz mentions this clock in a curious way—as though it were celebrated; as if every one was familiar with the particular "make"—as who should say "a Joe Manton gun," or "a Panhard motor-car," "a Tompion clock." To say that there was a clock in a room would not help much, though you might say there were Chippendale looking-glasses or Sheraton cabinets. But what could he mean by calling attention to the maker? I fancy that Boz, who had the most delicate sense in the world of grotesque, saw something quaint in the very sound of the name. No doubt his friends had asked him, "Did you see *the Tompion* clock?" It came off the tongue well

rounded; and as we hear the word we begin to think it must be important.

Tompion was really an eminent scientist—invented the form of escapement now found in watches. He was perhaps the greatest of English clockmakers, and died in 1713, aged 73. He had his portrait painted by Sir Godfrey Kneller, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. He drank the waters at Bath, and was benefited thereby. (Could he have been Bantam's Clapham gentleman?)

THE TOMPION CLOCK IN PUMP ROOM, BATH
By permission of *The Bath Chronicle*

It is beyond doubt that this gift of Tompion's was suggested by the New Pump Room, which was on the eve of completion at the time of his visit, and was opened a year later. We can hear the excellent Tompion saying, "Now, you'll want a good-going clock for your new rooms. I'll send you one down."

After all, and to make the thing stranger, little or nothing is known of his work, though at Hampton Court and in the clock museums there are some specimens. I believe that Boz had read up Warner's *History of Bath*, where he found the story of Bladud, and also the account of the Free Hospital, where he adopts almost the words of the "golden inscription." Here also he found our friend the Tompion described: "An excellent clock by Tompion ornaments the eastern recess." Again the same affected familiarity.

One of the most singular and touching things in fiction is Boz's pleading for the destitute when he describes the Pump Room. He appeals for the poor, who might obtain the water and treatment at the Free Hospital—an utterly out-of-place suggestion in a novel. Yet this was a youth of two-and-twenty, at the pinnacle of success—the talk of the town; and yet he puts in a word for the poor? "Golden words," he describes the inscription; but his own were often true gold.

"The following inscription," says the chronicler, "is deservedly painted on a panel in letters of gold and placed behind the vase in the Pump Room :—

THE HOSPITAL
in this city
Open to the Sick Poor of every part of the world
To whose cases the waters are applicable
(*The Poor of Bath only excepted*)
was first established and is still supported
by the Charitable
Contributions of the Liberal and Humane.

Oh, pause awhile, whoe'er thou art
That drink'st this healing stream :
If e'er compassion o'er thy Heart
Diffuse its heavenly Beam ;
Think on the wretch whose distant lot
This friendly aid denies ;
Think how in some poor lonely cot
He unregarded lies !
Hither the helpless stranger bring,
Relieve his heartfelt woe,
And let thy bounty like this spring
In genial currents flow.
So may thy years, from Grief and Pain,
And pining Want be free ;
And thou from Heav'n that mercy gain
The poor receive from thee."

Boz complains that these verses were removed from their place. The passage from *Pickwick*—also in golden letters—might be substituted. At this moment his bust, with Pickwickian scenes on the pedestal, has been appropriately set up close to the Tompion clock.

POETICAL TRIBUTES TO CHARLES DICKENS

XVII

THE artist sleeps, yet friends are here he gave,
The fair dream-children that his fancy drew ;
A phantom crowd still gathers at his grave,
And in each character he lives anew.

Soft winds of summer breathe along the fane,
The honoured sepulchre where Dickens lies ;
An emigravit write we in our pain—
He is not dead—the artist never dies.

The statesman wins the mantle of a peer,
The warrior boasts all titles of renown ;
We leave one laurel only on his bier,
And England's love is greater than a crown.—S. C.

Daily Paper, June, 1870.

AN EXAMINATION IN DICKENS'S WORKS

FULL instructions for competitors will be found in previous issues of *The Dickensian*. The latest date for receiving papers for this month's set of questions is 18 May.

V—BARNABY RUDGE

1. State error as to time of year, in narration relative to Mrs. Rudge's country home, after removal from London.
2. For what valuables—in the opinion of a common-sense employé—had Protestants a special preference?
3. Where occurs the first suggestion of a clue to Hugh's parentage, as known to a Government official?
4. Name certain class differences in society, as indicated by a gentleman of refinement.
5. For what exact length of time was Edward Chester invalided at Southwark, when recovering from his night attack?
6. John Willet was seldom dilatory in one particular. State reference.
7. On what occasion was Miss Miggs addressed by a scriptural name not received from her God-parents?
8. Give day and date in full of Hugh's robbery from Dolly Varden.
9. Quote name of fabulous animal as first applied to Hugh.
10. What was Mr. Varden's special mission in life, as stated by himself?
11. What was the precise date of visit by Benjamin Staggs to the country retreat of Barnaby's mother?
12. What names in natural history were tentatively applied to Joseph Willet in a confidential interview by a visitor of distinction?
13. Quote date of Lord George Gordon's introduction in the tale of *Barnaby Rudge*.
14. What preventative was employed (and by whom) against an infectious malady?
15. Who was John Willet's landlord?
16. What competition is indicated on the part of angry devildom?
17. On what day and date did Rudge visit the "Maypole" a second time?
18. Give character sketch of Gabriel Varden in 50 words.
19. Furnish allusions to the Gunpowder Plot, Flowers in Eden, Anchor of Hope, the devil himself, the Church Catechism, and the Judgment Day.
20. What Metropolitan landmark was expressly exempted from damage in the rules of an inconoclastic society?

RESULT OF COMPETITION IV
THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP

THE paper set for this competition has proved a comparatively easy one, with the result that little alteration is made in the places of the leading competitors. Miss F. Innocent has gone from sixth place to fourth. There is no falling off in interest, as all the papers this month clearly show. We anticipate seeing some new names in the first six next month.

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2. "'Twas ever thus, from childhood's hour," etc. Eight lines from T. Moore's *Lallah Rookh* (Chap. 56).
3. *Mrs. Hannah More*, as presented in Mrs. Jarley's Waxwork (Chap. 29).
4. "*Doctors* seldom take their own prescriptions, *Divines* do not always practise what they preach, *Lawyers* are shy of meddling with the Law" (Chap. 37).
5. In connexion with Mr. Swiveller's allusion to Whittington, "*I wish cats were scarcer*" (Chap. 50).
6. Eldorado (Chap. 9); Covent Garden Market (Chap. 1); Long Acre (Chap. 8).
7. Mrs. Jarley, "learning that she had been threatened with the indignity of Stocks and Penance," exclaimed, "*I am a'most inclined to turn atheist*" (Chap. 32).

8. "A little devil" (Chap. 51).
9. *A metaphorical perspective.* The narrator of this story observes: "I already saw before me a region on which I was little disposed to enter" (Chap. 1).
10. "*Harris*" (Chap. 17); known as Short, "by reason of the small size of his legs."
11. A lady unknown, referred to by Mrs. Nubbles as the "lodger at the cheesemonger's *round the corner.*" Presumably, the corner of the "square paved court" in London (Chap. 10), where she herself resided (Chap. 21).
12. Seventeen references. See chapters 1 (2), 12, 18, 26, 33, 42, 44, 52, 54, 55 (2), 69 (2), 71 (2), 72.
13. "*Mister Snivelling*"—so called by Drury Lane servant girl (Chap. 7); and "*Mr. Liverer*"—by the Marchioness, when speaking of his recent delirium (Chap. 64).
14. "The light, *creation's mind*, was everywhere, and all things owned its power" (Chap. 15).
15. One of Jerry's dancing dogs (Chap. 18).
16. With one eye obscured by his cap, "fallen on his nose"—splashed and dirty (Chap. 18).
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18. Character Sketch.
19. "A Troubadour" (Chap. 51); "The blue Welsh Mountains far away" (Chap. 46).
20. "The *Tragic Muse* might have winked with greater consistency." *Damascus, Grand Cairo* (Chap. 64).

THE SIX LEADING COMPETITORS

Miss W. M. Nash	950	Miss F. Innocent	884
Mrs. E. M. Hill	914	Mr. C. G. Price	881
Miss M. M. Fowler	904	Mr. F. G. Grunwell	852

The two next in order have 846 and 832 marks respectively.

DICKENS FELLOWSHIP CONVALESCENT HOME

SUBSCRIPTION LIST

	£	s.	d.
Amount previously acknowledged	138	17	0
Thomas Buzzard, M.D.	1	1	0
Oscar Browning	0	10	0
Hammond Hall	1	1	0
Rev. Russell Wakefield	5	0	0
J. Cuming Walters	1	1	0
Mrs. Whatley	0	10	6
Miss Benck	0	5	0
C. H. Whatley	0	10	6
Tom Gallon	2	2	0
Lord Rothschild	5	5	0
Percy Fitzgerald	5	0	0
Francesco Berger	1	1	0
Rev. Hook Longsdon	1	1	0
W. W. Crotch	1	1	0
H. Pitman Clarke	0	5	0
George A. Massingham	1	1	0
G. J. Hayes	0	5	0
Hon. George Spencer Lyttleton, C.B.	5	0	0
Collected by Miss A. W. Meatyard and Miss A. M. Westley	2	0	0
Mrs. Edith I. Hall	3	3	0
Miss M. Neilson	0	2	6
Mrs. Williams	1	1	0
Chesterfield Branch (per Mrs. W. Barnes)	0	10	0
Collecting cards*:—			
Mr. E. P. Haslam	3	2	6
Miss Miniken	2	8	4
Mr. Dexter	0	7	0
Miss Hope	0	15	6
Mr. Ball	0	14	6
Miss M. Clarkson	1	10	0
Mr. E. W. Brown	0	15	0
Mr. W. S. London	6	7	0
Mr. A. Humphreys	0	5	0
Miss I. Niedermann	0	9	0
Miss C. Durand	1	1	0
Mr. A. E. Garnett	0	10	0
Miss Shepherd	0	5	3
Miss K. Elliott	0	16	6
Miss Innocent	0	3	0
Mr. S. D. Newton	0	5	0
Mrs. Castledine	0	18	0
Portsmouth Branch (per Mr. L. de Wolff	1	1	0
	£199	7	1

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COVENTRY AND DICKENS

By O. SACK

THE historic city of Coventry, like most of the important towns of England, has its Dickens associations. They are not numerous, but are none the less interesting on that account. Readers of *Pickwick Papers* will remember the memorable journey from Bristol to London described in Chapter Fifty, when Sam Weller and Bob Sawyer enjoyed themselves in their own particular manner on top of the coach. Having reached the Royal Hotel, Birmingham, overnight, they continued their journey the next morning and made Coventry their first stop to change horses. They had evidently come at a rare rate, for "the steam

"LITTLE NELL'S GATEWAY," COVENTRY

ascended from the horses in such clouds as wholly to obscure the hostler," during whose operations on the animals Sam related the dead postboy and dead donkey story. The name of the hotel is not stated in this instance, although at most of the other stopping-places it is.

Coventry figures again in *The Old Curiosity Shop*. At least there seems little doubt that Little Nell and her grandfather passed through the city on their way to Birmingham. Mr. Percy Fitzgerald is well satisfied that Coventry is the town where Mrs. Jarley gave the performance the night after encountering the two wayfarers. "The piece of waste ground that lay just within the old town gate" where they "put up" at midnight, might very well be the piece of ground where last

Easter-tide were to be seen the "round-abouts" and the country fair. According to the book, Nell was wandering about the place at night, and came upon an old gateway "with its low archway very black and dark," and here caught sight of Quilp and hid herself in its shadow.

During one of my visits to Coventry, the ancient gate in Much Park Street was pointed out to me as being locally known as "Little Nell's Gateway." I have been, however, unable to trace the authority of this identification. It might have been, of course, either of the four gates to the city. But the fact that local tradition connects it with *The Old Curiosity Shop*, makes it interesting and worth noting at least.

The most interesting association the city has with Dickens was the public dinner given to him in December, 1858, at the Castle Hotel. The previous year he had given a reading of *A Christmas Carol* in aid of the funds of the Coventry Institute, and on the occasion of the dinner he was presented with a gold repeater watch of special construction, made by the watchmakers of the town as a mark of gratitude.

In acknowledging this testimonial Dickens said: "This watch, with which you have presented me, shall be my companion in my hours of sedentary working at home and in my wanderings abroad. It shall never be absent from my side, and it shall reckon off the labours of my future days . . . and when I have done with time and its measurement, this watch shall belong to my children; and as I have seven boys, and as they have all begun to serve their country in various ways, or to elect into what distant regions they shall roam, it is not only possible, but probable, that this little voice will be heard scores of years hence—who knows?—in some yet unfounded city in the wilds of Australia, or communicating Greenwich time to Coventry Street, Japan. . . . From my heart of hearts I can assure you that the memory of to-night, and of your picturesque and ancient city, will never be absent from my mind, and I can never more hear the slightest mention of the name of Coventry without having inspired in my breast sentiments of unusual emotion and unusual attachment."

THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

HERE, THERE, AND EVERYWHERE

LONDON

THE concert-recital, which took place at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, on 4 April, concluded our fourth session, which has been entirely as enjoyable as its predecessors. Mr. J. Cuming Walters presided. The attraction of the evening was, of course, the appearance of Mr. Bransby Williams, the best known and the best impersonator of Dickens's characters. On this occasion he did not "do Dickens," but he gave several recitations in his very best style, and finished up with two of his famous impersonations of famous actors—Mr. Beerbohm Tree and Sir Henry Irving. The meeting elected Mr. Williams a Vice-President of the Fellowship, and the Chairman, on behalf of the Council, handed him a copy of Mr. Percy Fitzgerald's *Life of Charles Dickens, as Revealed in his Writings*, inscribed by the author. In making the presentation, Mr. Walters spoke gratefully of Mr. Williams's real interest in, and the kind services to, the Fellowship. The rest of the programme was excellent, there not being a weak item. Miss Winifred Nash gave two pianoforte solos, in addition to acting as accompanist; songs were rendered by Madam Lena Michelbacher, Mrs. Max

Guy, Miss Silvia Raphael, and Mr. Cecil Cameron; whilst Mr. John Tosiene and Mr. W. A. Stanley gave recitations. The Chairman during the evening expressed the gathering's appreciation of the kind services of these ladies and gentlemen.

NEEDLEWORK AND CHARITABLE GUILD

THE Hon. Secretary begs to acknowledge with thanks the sum of 1s. from a friend, under the signature of "Interested." Also from other members various parcels of books and magazines, which have given bright hours to the sick, and clothing that has carried comfort to those in need.

BRIGHTON BRANCH

MR. HENRY DAVEY, President, presided over a well-attended meeting of members and friends on 24 March, at Steine House, when Mr. W. W. Bartlett read an interesting paper on "Dickens as a Social Reformer." The essayist mentioned, among many social abuses that Dickens tilted at with his powerful pen, the cruel system of employment of young children at unhealthy trades, notably chimney-sweeping, the questions of Poor Law Relief and the Housing of the Poor, the drink problem—intensified by the existence of the gin shop—imprisonment for debt, Chancery Law injustices and delays, and the iniquities of public-school life, as experienced especially in Yorkshire, under the villainous administration of Mr. Squeers and others of his kind.

BRISTOL AND CLIFTON DICKENS SOCIETY (AFFILIATED)

A SUCCESSFUL "whist drive" was given on 7 April, in the commodious rooms of Stuckey's Restaurant. The arrangements were in the hands of Mr. H. Theo. Jones and Mr. T. Giddings. In the absence of the President (the Rev. A. N. Blatchford, B.A.), the Vice-President (Mr. A. J. Tonkin) received the party at seven o'clock. There were 104 guests, and eight prizes were given. Of the ladies' prizes, the first was won by Mrs. Fortt, whilst the second prize went to Miss M. Sutton: the third was taken by Mrs. C. Weeks, and a consolation prize was awarded to Miss Nancy Bruford. Mr. E. Dubin took the first gentleman's prize, and Mr. E. Thomas the second; the third, a statuette of Charles Dickens, was won by Mr. Geo. B. Ackerman, and the consolation prize went to Mr. James Hemmens. All profits of the gathering are devoted to charity. This is the Society's last meeting of the season except the business meeting.

BRIXTON BRANCH

TWO meetings were held during April, on 2nd and 9th. On the first occasion Mr. J. Skeen and his brother read papers on "Contrasts in Dickens's Works" and *The Battle of Life* respectively. Both were interesting papers, and with Mr. P. A. Jones, the chairman, making some excellent remarks concerning Dickens's plan of bringing subjects for reform before the public, and Miss Skeen enlivening the evening with songs, a good time resulted.

The second evening found Mr. Sidney Marriott presiding over a large audience, when the Rev. Thurston Pain gave three readings from *A Tale of Two Cities*, his rendering of which received applause from the interested listeners. Mr. Pain is a reader of a very high order. Mr. Marriott gave a short résumé of the book and Mr. Whitburn sang several songs.

EDINBURGH AND LEITH BRANCH

ON Thursday evening, 22 March, in the Goold Hall, Captain M. Morrison gave a lecture on "Dickens as a Novelist and Social Reformer." The President occupied the chair and introduced the lecturer, explaining that Captain Morrison had kindly consented to take Dr. Hew Morrison's place. Captain Morrison's lecture was most interesting: he dealt with the whole

range of the novels and sketches, noting briefly the aims and objects contained in each, and treating them in an able, comprehensive, and sympathetic manner that elicited the warm appreciation of his audience. The customary vote of thanks closed the proceedings.

A lecture by "Gabriel Setoun" is always popular, and a large audience assembled on the evening of 5 April, in the Goold Hall, to hear Mr. Hepburn's views of Dickens's treatment in his novels of child life. Mr. Hepburn treated his subject, "Dickens's Children," throughout in a broad, comprehensive, and academic style, showing what a large share Charles Dickens's own sad experiences during childhood had in his after-delineations of children. Those children, Mr. Hepburn said, were no mere puppets of the imagination—they were real flesh and blood; we laughed with them, wept with them; so vivid, so true was their portraiture that they seemed actually to live.

HULL BRANCH

TWO meetings were held during March, on the 2nd and 23rd respectively; the President (Mr. Mortimer Petty, B.A.) was in the chair on the first occasion. The subject for consideration was *The Old Curiosity Shop*. There was a good attendance to hear Mr. W. Taylor relate the fortunes of Little Nell and her old grandfather. At the close of a most interesting paper the discussion seemed to centre chiefly on the possibility of a child situated as Little Nell was not being contaminated by the sordid surroundings in which she lived. By special request Mr. Holgate Ellison gave an impersonation of the "old dealer in curios."

The members turned up in good force on 23 March, when Mr. Simon Harris lectured on "Charles Dickens: His Life and Work." The President (Mr. Mortimer Petty, B.A.) was in the chair. The lecture was throughout a eulogium rather than a criticism, dealing with the early struggles of the great author, with some personal recollections of his tremendous popularity on the public platform.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH

THE closing meeting of the 1905–6 session of this Society was held on 30 March, in the Common Hall, when the President (Dr. Edgar Browne) brilliantly lectured on the "Personality of Dickens." He, to the entire satisfaction of a very large audience, established his theory that the real Dickens will be found in the character of Nicholas Nickleby, that his mother is portrayed in Mrs. Nickleby, but that for his father we must take the inimitable Micawber, whose true prison life, however, is best exhibited in the *Pickwick Papers* and *Little Dorrit*. After the lecture the business of the Fellowship was entered upon, five ladies and seven gentlemen being elected to the Council, with Mrs. E. H. Bell (Hon. Treasurer) and Mr. C. P. Mitchell (Hon. Secretary) as ex-officio members. The balance-sheet showed a handsome sum on the right side.

MANCHESTER BRANCH

THIS branch held its third annual meeting on 6 April, at the Chartered Accountants' Hall. Mr. W. H. Vaughan presided. The report recorded a year of steady progress. Forty-four new members had been enrolled since the last annual meeting, bringing up the numerical strength of the branch to 131, exclusive of honorary vice-presidents. The members felt that no more appropriate manner of celebrating the birthday of Charles Dickens could be adopted than that of endeavouring to help the helpless, and, mainly owing to the efforts of the lady members of the branch, a sale of work was organized in aid of the Convalescent Home for Crippled Children at Marple, by which a sum of £26 was raised for that deserving institution. A satisfactory balance-sheet was presented, and this and the report were passed. Sir W. H. Bailey was re-elected President of the branch.

MELBOURNE BRANCH

THERE was a large attendance at our March meeting, Mr. Frank Scrivenor, Vice-President, in the chair. An exceptionally fine programme was rendered, consisting of two papers—"Some Pickwickian Characters," by Miss Bate, one of our most promising young lady members, and "*David Copperfield*, a criticism," by another young lady residing in a distant town, kindly read by her uncle, Mr. Hunt; recitation, "Fifty-two," from *A Tale of Two Cities*, by Mr. E. Smith; reading, "Continuation of Fifty-two," by Miss Godwin Smith; recitation, "Copperfield and the Waiter," by Miss Gwen. Joske; and reading, "Dr. Marigold," by Mr. B. E. Doyle. The book chosen for consideration and discussion at the April meeting is *Pickwick*.

PORTSMOUTH BRANCH

THIS is now well established as the largest branch of the Fellowship. In January last, when the present Hon. Secretary took office, the number of members on the roll was 667. No less than 171 have been added, the branch now boasting the record membership of 838. The Portsmouth branch has always especially interested itself in the welfare of the crippled children and the necessitous blind. The "Tiny Tims" had their Tea and Fête in February, and now it is the turn of the non-sighted. It is proposed to give these a Tea and Outing to Horndean on 21 June, special cars being secured for their conveyance. With such a large membership there should be no difficulty in meeting the expenses, and it is satisfactory to know that, financially, the branch has never been in a healthier condition. Five guineas has been set aside as the nucleus of a fund for endowing a Charles Dickens's Cot in the Royal Portsmouth Hospital.

SHEFFIELD BRANCH

A SUCCESSFUL smoking concert, which drew 350 people to the Royal Victoria Hotel, marked the close of the winter session of the branch. The one Dickensian item in an agreeable programme was a recitation by Miss A. Eaton, who treated the incident of David Copperfield and the waiter with telling brightness and freshness.

The Hon. Secretary (Mr. T. W. Padmore), commenting on the position of the Society, remarked that a promise made at the concert of a year ago had been redeemed. During the Christmas week 900 dinners were given to the poorest children who could be found in Sheffield. The example thus set by gentlemen was followed by the ladies of the Fellowship, who gave 250 free teas to the poorest children of the Crofts district. He hoped that when Christmas came again the members would be able to do equally well. There was now a total membership of 565. Of those who joined in the first year 200 had left the Society, and he wanted them back again. There were 120 members more than there were last year, and that was very satisfactory. "But we want to have the largest membership of any fellowship in the country," he added. "We have no envy against Portsmouth—we simply want to beat them."

SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH

AN exceptionally pleasant meeting was held at the Kell Hall, on 19 January, when the Rev. W. T. Martin gave a reading, and Mr. F. Harwood a recitation from *Bleak House;* the Rev. W. A. C. Chevalier also delighting his fellow-members with the concluding reading of his "Reminiscences of Charles Dickens." Miss A. C. Peerson supplied the musical items.

On 21 March (the management kindly offering special advantages) the members attended Mr. Tree's production of *Oliver Twist*, at the Grand Theatre, the spacious dress circle being filled with the delighted audience.

The concluding meeting of the session took place on 9 April, when excellent readings were given by Mrs. Seaward and the Rev. W. Garwood.

A recitation was well rendered by Mr. E. Hughes, and a fine address on Charles Dickens was given by Mr. W. J. Harman. The Misses Tracy, Child, and Cheverton, and Mr. Sprague contributed the musical portion of the programme. The pleasure of the meeting was much enhanced by a visit from Mr. F. Yoxall, of Birmingham, who received a very hearty welcome from the members.

STOCKPORT BRANCH

THE last meeting of the session was held on 6 March in the librarian's room. The chair was taken by Mr. Holt, Vice-President. Mr. M. Fletcher read a paper on "Dickens and Manchester." During Dickens's visit he met the Grant Brothers, who were afterwards immortalized by him in *Nicholas Nickelby* as the Cheeryble Brothers. It is interesting to the members of the Stockport Sunday school to know that the elder Grant, Daniel, qualified as a trustee of the school in 1824. He entertained Dr. Chalmers, the preacher of our annual sermon of that year, and brought him to the school in his carriage from Ramsbottom. Mr. Fletcher then dealt with Dickens's association, with the city, with his acting there, and the connexion his books have with it.

Mr. Josiah Clarkson, who had received a certificate at the hands of Dickens, expressed his pleasure at being present at the meeting, and presented the certificate he had received as a relic for the Fellowship. The best thanks of the meeting to Mr. Clarkson for his gift and to the chairman for presiding were passed unanimously. Mr. Holland recited a poem, which embodied the teachings of Dickens's works as a fitting close to the meetings of the session.

TORONTO (CANADA) BRANCH

THE first annual banquet of the branch, on 7 February, in commemoration of the ninety-fourth anniversary of Dickens's birth, was a brilliant success from every point of view. More than one hundred members and their friends sat down to dinner at McConkey's Restaurant. The menu cards were tastefully and appropriately gotten up, and were taken away by the guests as souvenirs of the occasion. At the head of the programme appeared this quotation from American Notes: "Canada has held, and always will retain, a foremost place in my remembrance."

Although Professor Clark, who was to have spoken on "Dickens's Place in Literature," found it impossible to be present, there was an excellent list of speakers, including Dr. J. S. Hart, on "The Doctors of Dickens"; Dr. J. T. Gilmour, on "Dickens and Prison Reform"; also a reading by Mr. Bell-Smith. Dr. Malcolm W. Sparrow contributed two vocal numbers, one of them a new setting of "The ivy green," by Mr. E. H. Tiffany, of Alexandria, Ont., and dedicated by him to the branch. Mr. J. W. Bengough recited an original poem, speculating on the ownership of the lock of hair recently discovered in the President's Dickens watch. The President (Mr. E. S. Williamson) presided, and introduced the speakers with appropriate Dickensian references to the subjects assigned to them.

WEST LONDON SUBURBAN BRANCH

THIS branch held its final meeting of the session on Friday, the 6th instant. "The Passing of Sydney Carton" and Bret Harte's well-known poem on Dickens were skilfully recited by Mr. H. C. Tyrrell. Miss Helen Brinckman contributed some of her clever sketches of Dickens characters, including Mrs. Gargery, Miss Miggs, and The Vengeance. Readings were given by Mr. Chevob, "A Character Sketch of Laurence Boythorne"; Mr. Hilton, "Mr. Winkle's Courtship," and Mr. Jacobs, "The Death of Jo." A delightful paper, "A Defence of Mr. Jingle," was read by Mr. Leicester Romayne, and was followed by a discussion, in which several members took part. Mr. A. E. Hurdle, owing to the absence through illness of the President, acted as chairman.

WINNIPEG BRANCH

On 22 March the members gathered at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Kingdon, and spent a very delightful evening with Pickwickian readings, cards, and music.

Messrs. Porteus, McLaughlan, Kingdon, Beatty, Professor Will, and Stapleton, and Miss M. Elliott took part in a character reading of the chapter taken from *Pickwick Papers*, descriptive of Mr. Pickwick's journey down to Ipswich in the company of Mr. Magnus and the Wellers, and Mr. Pickwick's subsequent adventures in a strange hotel.

An excellent reading was given by Mr. Porteus, wherein we see Mr. Weller, senior, besieged by divers widows, and a single young lady "as was 53." Mr. Stapleton read a paper on the origin of the *Pickwick Papers*. A very pleasant evening was brought to a close in a fitting manner, namely the serving out of "wittles." The President (Dr. Charles Woollard) had the misfortune to be confined in the hospital for some weeks, but has now recovered sufficiently to proceed on a trip to Australia in search of health.

YORK BRANCH

The members and friends of the branch met in Peckett Street Lecture Room on 4 April for a "social evening" in connexion with the winding-up of the fourth session. Mr. Councillor Morley, who took the chair, had an exceptionally good bill of fare to present to the meeting, as a rare musical treat had been very kindly provided by Miss Penty, and excellent refreshments were served during the evening by Mrs. G. W. Dodds, the Hon. Secretary of the Needlework Guild, and a number of willing helpers. The York Branch has during the session entertained over two hundred of the poorest, crippled, and most delicate children to an excellent tea and entertainment; and the members of the Needlework Guild, under the able superintendence of Mrs. G. W. Dodds, have made over one hundred useful articles of wearing apparel for poor children and aged and infirm poor and needy, and an earnest appeal is made for additional workers and contributors of material to enable the Needlework Guild to extend its sphere of usefulness.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"EDWIN DROOD"

To the Editor of "The Dickensian."

Dear Sir,—I have just reread this "master-piece," as Proctor calls it. In view of the recent discussion, I should like to ask how it is that more of us are not satisfied with Proctor's "Loving Study" as a satisfactory summing up and conclusion of the whole matter? To me it is a most comforting essay to read after coming to those unfortunate stars at the last line of the real tale. I have no doubt that Drood was Datchery.

Yours faithfully, H. J. Burt.

Selwood, Norfolk Road, Maidenhead, 2 *April*, 1906.

[Many readers think otherwise. Has our correspondent read Mr. Cuming Walters's *Clues to the Mystery of Dickens's Edwin Drood*, and the various articles on the subject which have appeared in our pages?—Ed.]

W FOR V

Sir,—It is certain that the substitution of the sound of *w* for that of *v* is common among the lower orders in East Suffolk. For instance, "valuation" is always "waluation", but the converse I do not remember to have heard in these parts. A stepmother is always called a "mother-in-law," and there is a popular rustic song on this subject which can be heard in inn kitchens.

Yours truly, E. T. Evans.

Byng Hall, Wickham Market, 30 *March*, 1906.

RE CONVALESCENT HOME SCHEME

DEAR SIR,—May I, as a member of the Dickens Fellowship and one deeply interested in this scheme, say a few words in reply to Mr. H. Roberts's letter in your April issue?

Mr. Roberts appears to suggest that instead of having our own Home we should join with another Home in need of funds. I should like to point out to him, and others who agree with him, the drawbacks to such a scheme.

The fund now amounts to about £200 given *specifically* for a Dickens Fellowship Convalescent Home. It would therefore be necessary to get the sanction of every contributor before we could alter the scheme. But let us assume, however, that this sanction is obtained. What about the future? Will our members and friends take the same interest in maintaining a wing of another Home as they would in a Home of our own? I think not. We might give the money this year, but I doubt if it would ever be in our power to repeat the help another year to the same extent. There are other drawbacks which I need not mention at the moment relating to locality, conditions of acceptance, clothing, etc., but I hope I have said enough to induce Mr. Roberts to reconsider his protest and to give our Home his hearty support.

The Dickens Fellowship ought to be able to carry this truly Dickensian scheme through, and I have the strongest belief that our members will make it possible for it to do so.

Yours faithfully,

E. P. HASLAM.

WOODSIDE PARK, N., 20 *April*, 1906.

QUERIES AND ANSWERS

"I didn't know, and now I do know, and that shows the advantage of asking, don't it?"—ROSA DARTLE.

QUERIES

TITBULL'S ALMS-HOUSES.—I should like to know if "Titbull's Almshouses," referred to in *The Uncommercial Traveller*, are still standing and occupied. EMILY S. BURRELL.

DICKENS'S LETTERS.—Can any one tell me if there is an edition in print of the letters of Dickens? GEE.

THE BEST CLUB IN LONDON.—Did Dickens invent this phrase as applied to the House of Commons? In *Our Mutual Friend* Veneering remarks, "What you think of my entering the House of Commons?" "I think," rejoins Twemlow feelingly, "*that it is the best club in London.*" M. P.

ANSWERS

TITBULL'S ALMS-HOUSES.—See article, "Through Whitechapel with Dickens," in *The Dickensian*, September, 1905. We believe the building still stands. EDITOR.

DICKENS'S LETTERS.—Messrs. Macmillan & Co., of London, publish an edition of Dickens's letters at 3s. 6d. EDITOR.

"OLD STORIES RE-TOLD."—The articles in *All the Year Round*, under this title, were written by the late Walter Thornbury. T. W. T.

"THE CHILDREN."—This poem is stated to be the work of an American writer. It was presumably rewritten by Dickens, and was found in his desk after his death. W. T. T.

"MR. SAPSEA'S EFFIGY."—A reproduction of Mr. Kitton's sketch of this figure appeared in *The Dickensian* of last March. The effigy is believed to be in existence, but inquiries have failed to trace it. T. W. TYRRELL.

DICKENSIANA MONTH BY MONTH

BOOKS

Brief Literary Criticisms. By R. H. Hutton. (Chapter on Dickens.) London: Macmillan & Co. 4s. net.

NEWSPAPER AND MAGAZINE ARTICLES

"A Week at Waterloo: Dickens's comment on." With portrait and facsimile. *The Century Magazine*, April.

"Dickens in Switzerland." By Deshler Welch. Illustrated. *Harper's Magazine*, April.

"A Dip into the Past." By Tiburce Beaugeard. *Daily News*, 28 March.

"Girl Friend of Dickens: Little Dorrit's Original." With Portrait. *Daily Express*, 30 March.

"Little Dorrit at Home." *Daily News*, 31 March.

"Little Dorrit: the original of Dickens's famous character." *People*, 1 April.

"Pickwick and Punctuation." *Westminster Gazette*, 3 April.

"Disappearing Dickens Landmarks." Two photos. *Morning Leader*, 30 March.

"The Edwin Drood Syndicate." *The Cambridge Review*, Nos. 668–73. Cambridge: Elijah Johnson, Trinity Street. 6d. each.

"The Mystery of Edwin Drood." By A. M. P. *The L.C.C. Staff Gazette*, April.

"Lytton's 'John Acland.'" By J. Cuming Walters. *Athenæum*, 14 April.

"Other Times, Other Manners" (Pickwick Days and our own). By Percy Fitzgerald. *Chambers' Journal*, May.

"Pilgrimage to Dotheboys Hall." Illustrated. *Motor Cycle*, 9 April.

"Concerning Pickwick." *Keighley News*, 7 April.

"The Famous Jennings Millions." *Weekly Budget*, 14 April.

"Charles Dickens's Last Letter." A letter from Mr. Read Makeham, the owner. *Pall Mall Gazette*, 6 April.

"Little Dorrit's Church." Illustrated comment. By J. Ashby-Sterry. *Graphic*, 7 April.

"Dickens as a Social Reformer." By J. W. T. Ley. *National Home-Reading Union Magazine*, April.

"Dickens and Thackeray." By J. W. T. Ley. *Publisher and Bookseller*, 21 and 28 April.

"The Purposes of Dickens." By Rowland Grey. (1) "A Tale of Two Cities." *Great Thoughts*, 28 April.

"Boys: Past and Present, etc." (Dickens and children). By Joseph Hatton. *People*, 22 April.

THE NATIONAL DICKENS LIBRARY

Miss Helen D. Wilson, 8s. 8d.; Miss C. M. C. Crewe, 1s.; J. P. Ward, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Hahn, 2s.; the Misses Watson, 2s.; Miss Helen Wilson, 2s.; W. C. Newcom, 1s.; Chesterfield Branch, per Miss Barnes, 10s. 6d.; A. E. Hurdle, 2s. 6d.; Southampton Branch, per Miss Moody, £1 5s. 6d.; Mrs. E. I. Hall, 5s.; Stockport Branch, per Hon. Sec., £2 10s. Total to date, £34 14s. 2d.

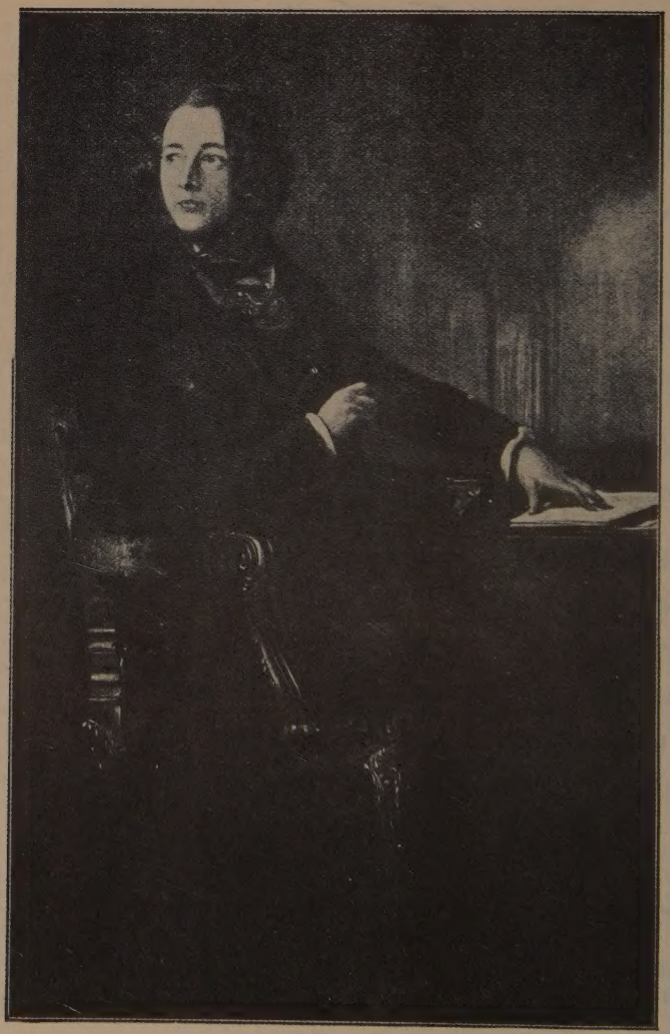
DIARY OF DICKENS MEETINGS

May 10. Edinburgh and Leith Branch: Conversazione at 5 St. Andrew Square, at 8.

,, 12. Dickens Fellowship Dramatic Club: Performance of *The Old Curiosity Shop* at Cripplegate Institute, Golden Lane, E.C., at 8. Tickets, 5s. and 2s. 6d., reserved seats; unreserved, 1s.

,, 14. Brixton Branch: Annual Conversazione at Brixton Independent Church at 7.30.

,, 19. Brighton Branch: Ladies' Night at Steine House, Old Steine.



CHARLES DICKENS, 1839 [See page 158

From the painting by D. Maclise, A.R.A., in the National Gallery